

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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SUBJECT: 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECHES BY HONECKER AND ABRASIMOV
IN EAST BERLIN

SUMMARY: SPEECHES BY FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR
ABRASIMOV DURING 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN EAST BERLIN
TOUCHED ON THE ALLIED ROLE IN WORLD WAR II AND ON THE CURRENT
STATUS OF WEST BERLIN. WHILE ABRASIMOV PROVED MORE CONCILIATORY
THAN HONECKER ON THE FIRST SUBJECT, HIS TONE WAS FIRM AND WARNING
ON THE SECOND. END SUMMARY

1. SPEECHES BY SED FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR
ABRASIMOV MARKING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION FROM
FASCISM DWELT LONG AND RITUALISTICALLY ON THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET
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UNION IN THE DEFEAT OF HITLER, WITH ABRASIMOV SOMEWHAT FREER THAN

HONECKER IN HIS PRAISE OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-HITLER COALITION. IN A FIFTY MINUTE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT AN SED-HOSTED CEREMONY AT THE GERMAN STATE OPERA ON MAY 7, HONECKER CHARACTERIZED THE EVENTS OF 1945 AS A TEST OF POWER BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND THE "THE MOST BARBARIC OFFSPRING OF CAPITALISM", READ FASCISM. VICTORY BY THE SOVIET UNION HAD LED TO IMPORTANT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES IN EUROPE, INCLUDING THE FOUNDING AND SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GDR, AND TO A SHIFT OF POWER IN THE WORLD IN FAVOR OF SOCIALISM FOR WHICH CUBA AND NOW VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS PROVIDED RECENT EXAMPLES. HONECKER EMPHASIZED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD CARRIED THE MAIN BURDEN OF THE WAR AGAINST HITLER, AND APART FROM A PASSING REFERENCE TO THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE "PEOPLES AND STATES OF THE ANTI-HITLER COALITION", HE RESERVED HIS PRAISE FOR THE "TITANIC STRUGGLE OF THE SOVIET UNION". BY WAY OF JUSTIFYING A LARGE CELEBRATION ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION, HONECKER POINTED TO THE TREATIES OF MOSCOW, WARSAW, BERLIN AND PRAGUE AND TO GDR ADMISSION TO THE UN AS INDICATIONS THAT PEACE IN EUROPE WAS MORE SECURE NOW THAN FIVE YEARS AGO AND THAT THERE WAS THUS MORE CAUSE TO CELEBRATE THIS YEAR. IN LINE WITH THE SOVIET POSITION ON DETENTE, THE FIRST SECRETARY LAUDED THE PEACE PROGRAM OF THE 24TH CPSU CONGRESS AND SPOKE FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN STATES WITH DIFFERING SOCIAL ORDERS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE CALLED FOR CONTINUED MILITARY VIGILANCE IN THE FACE OF "IMPERIALIST CIRCLES" WHO "SEEK TO BURY DETENTE AND RETURN TO THE COLD WAR" AND REPEATED FAMILIAR EXHORTATIONS FOR A RAPID CONCLUSION OF CSCE.

2. ABRASIMOV ADDRESSED ASSEMBLED SED OFFICIALS, SOVIET GUESTS AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AT A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY HELD AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN ON MAY 9 AND STRUCK A MORE CONCILIATORY TONE THAN HONECKER IN REGARD TO ALLIED PARTICIPATION IN 1945. WHILE THE WAR'S OUTCOME HAD FOR ABRASIMOV BEEN DECIDED ON THE SOVIET FRONT, THE SOVIET UNION REMEMBERED "THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ANTI-HITLER COALITION-THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC". AFTER THIS MENTION OF THE ALLIES BY NAME WITH THE US AT THE HEAD OF THE LIST, ABRASIMOV WENT ON TO PRAISE THE "BRAVERY AND COURAGE OF THEIR (THE ALLIES)"

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SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS" AND TO RECALL ALLIED ASSISTANCE IN FURNISHING WEAPONS, FOOD AND OTHER MATERIALS TO THE SOVIET UNION DURING THE WAR.

3. WHILE ABRASIMOV'S INTERPRETATION OF THE ALLIED ROLE WAS CLEARLY MORE BALANCED THAN THAT PRESENTED BY GDR SPEAKERS DURING THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, HIS REMARKS ON WEST BERLIN WERE ANYTHING BUT CONCILIATORY. SINGLING OUT THE

1971 QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, ABRASIMOV STATED THAT FURTHER NORMALIZATION IN AND AROUND WEST BERLIN DEPENDED ON STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE AGREEMENT'S "CENTRAL POINT", NAMELY, THAT WEST BERLIN IS NOT A CONSTITUENT PART OF THE FRG AND SHOULD NOT BE GOVERNED FROM THE FRG. HE THEN CONCLUDED: "I DO NOT SPEAK OF THIS MATTER TODAY BY CHANCE: THOSE PAGES OF WEST BERLIN'S HISTORY WHEN THERE WERE BY NO MEANS SECONDARY CONFLICTS AND FRICTIONS SHOULD NEVER BE REPEATED".

4. COMMENT: ABRASIMOV'S IMPLIED WARNING ON WEST BERLIN STANDS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE SOVIET NOTE OF MAY 15 TO UN GENERAL SECRETARY WALDHEIM REAFFIRMING THE VIEW THAT EAST BERLIN IS "AN INSEPARABLE, INTEGRAL COMPONENT" OF THE GDR WITH THE SAME LEGAL STATUS AS ANY OTHER SEGMENT OF THAT COUNTRY'S TERRITORY, AND THAT THE QA IN NO WAY AFFECTS EAST BERLIN'S STATUS AS CAPITAL OF THE GDR. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S STRONGLY-HELD VIEWS ON BERLIN FURTHER STAND OUT IN LIGHT OF THE OTHERWISE CONCILIATORY TONE OF HIS 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH. SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GDR'S INCESSANT PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF GRATITUDE AND INDEBTEDNESS TO THE "GLORIOUS SOVIET ARMY" ALREADY BORDER ON OVERKILL, THE SOVIETS IN EAST BERLIN WERE CONTENT TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE MAGNANIMOUS TOWARD THE ALLIES ON THIS OCCASION. IN THIS CASE, AS IN OTHERS RECENTLY SUCH AS PRESS COVERAGE OF US POLICIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE GDR STANCE HAS BEEN MORE HARD-LINE THAN THAT OF THE SOVIETS, A STATE OF AFFAIRS THAT HAS CAUSED COMMENT EVEN AMONG SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN EAST BERLIN, PERHAPS OUT OF CONCERN LEST THE GDR'S ATTITUDE JEOPARDIZE DETENTE, BUT MORE LIKELY WITH AN ASSUMED SENSE OF LARGESSE PREDICATED UPON THE VERY GDR STRIDENCY THEY WOULD CRITICIZE. ON THE GDR SIDE, THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS HAVE PROVIDED THE SED ANOTHER CHANCE TO FURTHER LEGITIMIZE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, AN TO LAUD THE UBIQUITOUS SOVIET

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INFLUENCE IN THE GDR BY PORTRAYING THE SOVIET AS THE SOLE "FRIENDS, LIBERATORS AND COMRADES." COOPER

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